

THE MISSOURI EDUCATOR.

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Contributors' Department.

For the Educator.

TEACHERS' CONVENTION IN CLAY COUNTY.

It affords us peculiar pleasure to call attention to the minutes of this body, published in our present number. Though the weather was most unpropitious, and the roads next to impassable, the ardor of the teachers of this noble county was paramount to every hindrance, and a very good turn out was the result. The utmost harmony characterized their proceedings, and a *oneness* of sentiment prevailed touching the great educational reforms and movements of the day.

The County Institute was warmly eulogized, and fully endorsed by the teachers present as fully competent to effect all that is claimed for it, in the way of benefiting the teacher, by elevating the standard of his profession. And be it known that this endorsement follows an actual trial of the Institute for four years, and consequently carries with it a peculiar force.

The Normal School, too, was loudly and unitedly called for by this Convention, and the dawning of that day joyously anticipated, when, by legislative sagacity and munificence, the cause of popular education shall be put upon that rational footing demanded by its paramount importance.

The reports read (*viz.*) on School Discipline, Text Books, Teachers' Salaries, Vocal Music in Schools, Teachers' Institutes, &c., were severally characterized by penetration and ability, and, were they published, would stand as monuments to the sterling good sense of the committees under whose supervision they were gotten up and reported.

The discussions of the several questions for debate were characterized no less by the amenities due the occasion than by the

ability displayed by the several disputants; and the conclusions reached were generally agreeable to the dictates of sound judgment and discretion.

Of the essays it may be said, without disparagement to the other proceedings, that they were marked by unusual ability. President THOMPSON'S essay on Civilization possessed the rare combinations of profound thought and investigation, with a beauty of style that rendered it a model of classic excellence; and praise, scarcely inferior, is due to the masterly production of young STAPLETON on Physiology.

We regard this meeting, with its varied and important proceedings and results, as a legitimate consequence of the deep and pervading interest of the people of Clay county on the vital subject of education. This is no mere speculative or theoretical interest, either, but an active, working principle, that shows itself in establishing good schools *all over the county*; in putting up *fine houses* for the education of their children; in employing *the best of teachers*, and in affording them *living salaries*; in having the *first Teachers' Institute*, and in keeping it up, "solitary and alone," for four years. These, and many others we might name, are the evidences of that interest we are proud to chronicle for this noble county.

It will be seen that a meeting of their County Institute is appointed to be held in the spring, which we trust may prove all that is expected of it in furthering the interests of popular education in that locality.

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CLAY COUNTY TEACHERS' CONVENTION.

According to previous appointment, the teachers of Clay county met in the city of Liberty, on the 4th day of November, 1858; when, on motion, JAMES LOVE was called to the Chair, and N. R. STONE appointed Secretary.

Mr. Flemming moved that we organize and proceed to business.

President Thompson moved that a committee be appointed to nominate officers for the Convention. The following persons were appointed said committee: Messrs. Flemming, Link and Justus.

J. T. Davis moved that a committee be appointed by the Chair to report a programme of business for to-morrow. Committee, President Wm. Thompson, Mrs. E. P. Abbott, and A. D. Brooks.

Adjourned to 10 o'clock to-morrow.

MORNING SESSION—10 A. M.

The Committee on Nominations reported, for President, JAMES LOVE; Vice President, A. D. BROOKS; Secretary, J. T. DAVIS; Assistant Secretary, R. W. FLEMING. Report received and adopted.

Prof. Love, in a very able and forcible manner, stated the object of the meeting.

Committee of Arrangements reported the following order of business for discussion:

Is the study of Languages better calculated to develop the mental powers than the study of Mathematics?

CIVILIZATION—President Thompson.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

DISCUSSION.—Should uniformity of Text-Books in the public schools be enforced by the County Superintendent?

ESSAY.—Popular Education: G. Hughes.
Report on School Discipline.

EVENING SESSION.

LECTURE.—American History: R. W. Flemming.

J. T. Davis moved that a reporter be selected to report abstracts of speeches. Prest. Thompson chosen reporter.

The President then called the regular order of business, when the following question was taken up for discussion: "Is the study of Languages better calculated to develop the mental powers than the study of Mathematics?" After an interesting and animated discussion, it was moved that the further discussion of the question be postponed until the afternoon.

Prest. Thompson then proceeded to read an Essay—subject: Civilization. Of President Thompson's Essay, it is enough to say that it was a masterly effort, and will long live in the memories of those present.

Adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

2 o'clock, P. M. Report of Committee on Text-Books read and adopted. In accordance with the provisions of said report, Messrs. Hughes, Davis, Love and Brooks, were appointed a committee to report at next meeting of Institute on Text Books.

Prest. Thompson offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That this Convention are of the opinion that a uniformity of Text-Books is not only desirable, but highly important, and that the proper source of authority as to such, is the united voice of teachers themselves, as heard through the organization of Teachers' Institutes.

Should uniformity of Text-Books in the public schools be enforced by the County Superintendent? After a lengthy discussion, was decided in the negative. Adjourned.

NIGHT SESSION.

7 o'clock, P. M. Mr. Flemming was excused from lecturing. Agreed to take up the question, "Should the Bible be used as a Text-Book in Schools?" After an interesting discussion, was decided in the affirmative. Adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock to-morrow.

THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION.

9 o'clock, A. M. The committee reported as order of exercises for discussion:

Is the co-education of the sexes, as pursued in the mixed schools of our country, conducive to the good of both sexes?

ESSAY.—Physiology: G. C. Stapleton.

Report of Committee on School Discipline.

Report of Committee on Teachers' Salaries.

Report of Committee on Vocal Music in Schools.

Prof. Love offered the following resolutions:

Resolved, That this Convention highly appreciate the importance of sustaining in our State a first-class periodical, devoted to the cause of popular education.

Resolved, That we are much pleased to find such periodical in the *MISSOURI EDUCATOR*, published at Jefferson City, and edited by T. J. Henderson, Esq., aided by an association of Teachers, appointed at the last session of the State Teachers' Convention.

Resolved, That we most cordially approve the above publication, and pledge ourselves to use our best efforts to insure it an extensive circulation in our county.

Resolved, That the School Trustees in every District in the county, be urged to subscribe for at least one copy for the benefit of the Teacher and School.

Report on Teachers Institute read and adopted. Prest. Thompson moved that said report be published in the *Liberty Tribune* and *Missouri Educator*.*

* The Secretary regrets to state that this report was lost or misplaced by the Committee before it reached his hands.

The following question was then discussed and decided 'in the affirmative: "Is the co-education of the sexes, as pursued in the mixed schools of our country, conducive to the good of both sexes?"

AFTERNOON SESSION.

2 o'clock, P. M. Report on Teachers' Salaries read and adopted.

Mr. Stapleton then read an Essay—Subject: Physiology. Mr. Stapleton is quite a young man (student of Wm. Jewell College); but judging from the manner in which he treated his subject, one could but conclude that he has attained a knowledge of the sciences possessed by few men at his age.

Resolved, That the next meeting of the Teachers' Institute, be held at Mt. Zion Church, on the first Wednesday in May, 1859.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Convention are due to the members of the Presbyterian Church, for the use of their house.

JAMES LOVE, *Pres't.*

JNO. T. DAVIS, *Sec'y.*

MARIES COUNTY TEACHERS' INSTITUTE.

At the first regular meeting of the Maries County Institute, assembled at the Court House, in Vienna, January 29, 1859, it was

"*Voted*, That the Secretary forward to the MISSOURI EDUCATOR a copy of the Constitution of Maries County Teachers' Institute, together with the names of its officers."

In compliance with the foregoing, I herewith forward the following extract from the proceedings of that meeting:

The constitutional committee, chosen at the preliminary meeting, held January 3d, being called upon for their report, offered the following preamble and constitution, which was unanimously adopted:

PREAMBLE.

The friends of education, in Maries county, Missouri, assembled in Vienna, this 29th day of January, 1859, for the purpose of forming an association for mutual aid and improvement among teachers and patrons of common schools in said county, do hereby form ourselves into a society for the purpose of advancing the cause of general education in Maries county. To secure uniformity of action, and to attain the objects herebefore mentioned, we, the members of this Association, which shall be styled Maries County Teachers' Institute, do, at this, its first regular meeting, adopt the following constitution for its future regulation:

CONSTITUTION.

ART. I. Any person of good moral character, who may be either a patron of schools or a teacher, or any one interested in the cause of general education, residing in Maries county, may become a member of Maries County Teachers' Institute, by subscribing his or her name to this constitution, and complying with its requirements: *Provided*, in all cases, no member, present at the time the name is offered, object thereto, and demand a vote

thereon; then a majority of the votes cast may elect the person a member. When a name is offered, the Secretary shall call it aloud, and if no member present demand a vote thereon, the name shall be recorded, and the person deemed a member.

ART. II. The officers of this Institute shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Board of Directors, who shall, with the exception of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, be elected annually, by a majority of the votes cast, by members present, at each regular annual meeting, on the last Friday in January, and hold their respective offices until the next annual meeting, or until their successors shall have been elected.

§ 1. The duties of the President shall be, to preside over the meetings of the Institute, when assembled; give the casting vote in all contested questions and elections; call special meetings at the request of ten members, by publicly advertising the same, together with the objects thereof, in any newspaper published in the county, if there is one published, or by posting six notices in six of the most public places in the county, two weeks before said meeting; decide questions of order among members, according to parliamentary usage; and perform such other duties as the nature of his office would require.

§ 2. The duties of the Vice-Presidents shall be to act, in the order of their election, as presiding officers, whenever a vacancy in the Chair shall occur, and to render the acting Chairman such aid, in the discharge of his duties, as may be required.

§ 3. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the regular and special meetings, conduct its necessary correspondence, and perform such other duties as the nature of his office may require.

§ 4. The Board of Directors shall consist, first, of the acting School Commissioner of Maries county, who shall be Chairman of the Board, *ex officio*, and four other members of the Institute, who shall be either teachers, or patrons of common schools. The Board shall report, at each regular meeting, through its Chairman, if present, or some other member of the Board, the exercises for the succeeding meeting, and assign to members their part. A majority of the Board may adopt any additional rules, not laid down in this constitution, or inconsistent therewith, or create and fill any office they may deem necessary to promote the interests of the Institute; but no office, rule, or appointment they may make, shall be in force, if a majority of the members present at a regular meeting of the Institute oppose the same.

ART. III. The regular meetings of the Institute shall be held on the last Friday in each month; and the annual meetings, for the election, shall be on the last Friday in January, of each year.

ART. IV. Contested questions, in elections, shall be decided by ballot, or by taking the yeas and nays; in which cases, the pre-

siding officer can only vote in case of a tie ; he shall then give the casting vote.

ART. V. Five members of the Institute, convened at any regular or special meeting, may constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business.

ART. VI. The means for defraying the expenses of the Institute shall be raised by voluntary subscription, unless the Institute, by a two-thirds vote, shall consent to a tax.

ART. VII. This constitution may be altered or amended, by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting, set apart or called for that purpose : *Provided*, the amendments, or alterations proposed, shall have been offered in writing, and read to the Institute, one month before action is taken thereon.

The following permanent officers were elected for the coming year :

President—JAMES P. FARMER.

Vice Presidents—ELIJAH JONES and E. H. KINNER.

Secretary—C. P. WALKER.

Board of Directors—S. KINZEY, Chairman ; D. S. WOODEY, SAMUEL W. REED, JOSEPH HUTCHESON, and WILLIAM KRONE.

The Board of Directors made a report, assigning to various members subjects upon which to deliver short lectures, either oral or written. Adjourned.

C. P. WALKER, Sec'y.

For the Educator.

AMERICAN WOMAN MUST CHANGE.

American woman change ! What an absurdity ! Is it possible they have any room for improvement ? Why, bless their dear souls, I hear the gentlemen say, I do not think they can change, unless it is for the worse ; and you believe them, you weak-minded butterflies of fashion. You who glide in the circles of so-called high life ; you who never experienced a frown of fortune, but have ever had the luxuries of life showered upon you in boundless profusion. You drink in the honeyed words of flattery, that fall from the lips of men who stand no higher in the scale of human worth than yourselves. It is to you I would speak, boldly, frankly and honestly. You may toss your haughty heads, scornfully curl those pouting lips, and with a look that would not sweeten vinegar, call me a strong-minded woman, an advocate of Lucy Stone's theory, and all this ; but I will not be frightened or discouraged.

I ask you, ladies of the nineteenth century, what are your pretensions, your aspirations ? Are they not to sport a large establishment, giving balls and parties, as if the fountain-head of an inexhaustible mine were in your possession ? Are they not to wear

the latest style of dress from Paris, and to outshine in the costliness of your wardrobe, the renowned Miss or Madame ——? Are they not to flirt with that handsome mustached foreigner, and if possible, get him upon your list of conquests? When he mockingly yields to your snare, do you not know he is laughing in his sleeve at your pretty schemes?

And this is the kind of woman that constitutes *refined* American society. It is a stain upon the name. There must be a change, a reformation. Already too many minds, that should, and might have been, bright ornaments to society, have sunk into oblivion and been lost forever; and why? Simply because they have yielded to the persuasion that their minds, like waxen tablets, were made merely to receive impressions; that ideas must first be generated in wiser heads, then moulded into language, before woman's feeble, incomprehensive mind can get one thought, while reasoning falls far without her sphere. She is looked upon as a play-thing, rather than a companion for man. She pleases the eye, that is all. Then do you wonder why many of her literary attempts are laughed and scoffed at? And when she makes a feeble effort at defense, by pointing to female names enrolled high in literary fame, it is said they are exceptions. Yes, they who have dared to fathom the mysteries of science, or dwelt in the beauteous realms of the poet, *are* exceptions.

It is for us to say how long such a state of things shall last. It is in our power to repudiate the idea that woman's mind is weak. Then let us awake to our calling, and enter with our whole soul into the work—call forth the latent energies that have so long slumbered; let the time formerly passed by our sisters in the fashionable sea of gaiety and folly, be engaged in the elevation of our sex, and discard that flippancy of language which has so long been one of our chief characteristics. Let the love of knowledge, from its purest source, urge us on in the investigation of nature's volume. Then only can we appreciate the good, the noble and the beautiful, as God designed we should; and when we can demonstrate we have a mind capable of so doing, we will prove worthy of the position assigned us as American woman.

C. P.

For the Educator.

"SWEET ARE THE USES OF ADVERSITY."

It is frequently the case, that when man is privileged to enjoy a high position in society; when he is considered a center of power and opulence, there is most sure to arise within him a feeling of vanity and conceit. So important does he sometimes appear in his own estimation, that all things by which he is surrounded seem to grow insignificant. Yea, he even holds in bitterness and scorn that God who gave him life. Should there not be some rebuking spirit, some influence exerted to check him in this down-

ward course? Let us see. Look at yon man, surrounded by all the luxuries of life, and upon whom prosperity is daily showering the wealth of the world. Avarice slowly creeps into his heart, and like the cunning serpent which winds itself around its victim ere the fatal blow is given, so it by degrees so wins his affections, 'tis almost death to separate them. Gold, more gold, is his constant cry, and his mental faculties—those faculties created for a higher and nobler purpose—are called into requisition to form new plots for the acquirement of sordid dust. Cunning, deceit, and treachery become conspicuous elements of his character. He has, however, an abundance of this world's treasure, and may, therefore, be called just, honorable, or anything else interested flatterers may please to title him.

While thus intoxicated by surrounding circumstances, he is hurled from his pinnacle of glory and renown, down to a common level with the beggar. So sudden a reverse of fortune he can scarcely realize. He calls upon those who formerly professed much friendship for him, to lend a helping hand in the hour of need; but human nature has not been his study. He knows not, that the torrent which swept away his gold also drowned his friends. Life presents a different aspect. It seems as if he were awakened from a horrible dream; but, alas! that it has been a reality is too apparent. He looks upon the past. Memory and imagination picture the many scenes through which he has gone. He sees a gaming table, surrounded by familiar associates, a wine goblet, sparkling with ruby wine. He hears terrible oaths issuing from that place of pollution. He sees the demoniac smile as each golden pile is clutched by some eager hand. But he starts, his cheek grows pallid, and why? He has recognized himself in the midst of that degraded group; he has seen himself as others saw him, and he asks, "Am I man? man, the noblest work of God!" Answer all of ye, who may. C. P.

Poetry.

For the Educator.

GOD IS LOVE.

BY C. P.

Does Nature speak? can words express
The language of her heart?
Why marvel, skeptic, 'tis to you,
The world her truths impart.
She'd crush the stern, rebellious thought,
That doubts the love of God;
That whispers of no higher state,
Than mouldering 'neath the sod.
Why doubt, because her voice is mute?
Her gilded open page,
Expresses more in three small words,
Than poets' in a age.

Go read, and let your heart be fired
By wisdom from above,
Drink deep the joys that thrill the soul,
Then say, is God not Love?

Philosophers can boast no theme
So eloquent as this,
While ancient lore, to sages wise,
Yields not one half its bliss.
'Tis seen where'er the eye is cast.
In sunshine, or in shade,
On mountain tops, when capped by snow,
Or in the sunny glade.

'Tis written in the forest's depths,
Upon each tiny bough;
'Tis murmured by the passing breeze,
In strains so sweet and low.
Methinks the angel songs of love
Cannot its tones excel,
Nor anthems from terrestrial choirs,
Entrance with deeper spell.

'Tis written in each floweret's cup,
From violets on the heath,
To where magnolias proudly wave,
And in each floral wreath.
But brighter far its glories shine,
When ~~born~~ in beauty springs
From out the rosy East, and shades
The dew-drop from her wings.

'Tis written in each coral reef,
And murmured by the sea;
And is the tune the pearl-shell sings,
Whose home is on the lea.
'Tis heard when tempests lower 'round,
When billows lash the shore,
When lightnings play athwart the sky,
And thunders loudly roar.

'Tis written in the darkest cave
In characters so fair,
The infidel starts back aghast,
And wonders why 'tis there.
Its massive pillars arching high,
Its star-lit dome above,
Its decorations riv'ling art,
All whisper, "God is Love."

A WORD TO YOUNG TEACHERS.

Repeated observation has proved conclusively, that *too much ardor* is a common fault with young teachers, more particularly, perhaps, with lady teachers. The young lady has looked forward through many years, to the era when she may be prepared to take charge of a school. The happy time has come, and her dearest

wish is to be a *good* teacher—to gain a *high* place. She engages in her duties eagerly—laying many fine plans, without even dreaming that she may not with resolution make them effectual. She must be a first class teacher—nothing less will satisfy her ambition, and in her innocence, she deems that all is pending on her “first school;” that will decide her reputation. So she commences, ardent and hopeful, and if the improvement of her pupils were proportionate to her ardor, in one short term they would pass almost from the alphabet to fluxions, or through what it has taken her many years to acquire. But very soon ardor becomes impatience because her scholars do not learn. She is anxious to see their improvement from day to day, and as she cannot, she tires of her employment, and perhaps abandons it after one or two terms, though she may have possessed all the elements of a good teacher, save patience and perseverance. Now, to such teachers we would say—let your ardor be well tempered with patience, and perseverance be united with energy, remembering that it is steady, persevering effort that will insure success. Look for the improvement of your pupils back through weeks, in some instances through months of time, if you would have it perceptible. The All-wise has so ordered that education enters the mind slowly, very slowly it seems to our short-sighted vision; but it is good that it should be thus. And oh! teach patiently, constantly, and the reward will certainly come. The improvement will be evident after many days.

Learn a lesson from the rain of heaven. The soil of the earth is dry and parched, but the sun’s rays are now absorbed, and the darkened clouds promise rain. But comes it down violently—at once? Oh, no. The shrouding mist first comes; then very small drops, so finely and gently that you can scarcely see that the dusty soil is even dampened; but look again after some hours—the surface is so thoroughly impregnated with moisture, that it will absorb large quantities of water—then heavy rains fall. So with the youthful mind. After much gently falling instruction it is prepared for deep draughts of knowledge.

Let your motive be then, a sincere desire to benefit your scholars. Seek for them the gentlest, plainest, pleasantest pathway up the rugged hill; and be assured your reputation will not suffer in consequence. And be not discouraged though you may repeat the same to a school for forty-nine times; at the fiftieth hearing it may be indelibly impressed. Will you then have labored in vain?

Trim well your lamp of patience from day to day, and by its true and constant light, you may effect a world of good, and win a desirable place in many hearts.

Do good for good’s own sake—so that thou shalt have a better praise, and reap a richer harvest of reward.—*Elmira Gazette.*


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 All communications and business letters should be addressed to "Missouri Educator, Jefferson City, Mo."

COUNTY SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS.

We are glad to see, amongst the acts of the last Legislature, one which allows County Courts to pay the School Commissioner such a salary as they may think just and expedient. This office has been almost useless, and in many counties has fallen into utter disrepute, from the fact that there was no adequate compensation for the labor performed. If the County Courts will offer a respectable salary, and then secure the services of a man whose talents, and acquirements, and experience qualify him for the work, the County Commissioner can do more than any other officer to perfect the condition of our common schools. He should be a man of some practical experience as a teacher, possessing enlarged and liberal views of the subject of popular education, and withal, a man who is willing to devote himself with quenchless zeal and tireless energy to the work he undertakes to perform.

In those counties where liberal views are entertained upon the subject, and this course is pursued in the appointment and payment of a School Commissioner, we may soon expect to find a model system of popular instruction; and where such a course is once adopted, and the people begin to reap its benefits, there will be no danger of backward steps on the part of the County Courts.

In our large towns and cities, the Superintendent of Public Schools is the head of the whole system; he is the most responsible, highest salaried, and generally, the hardest working officer in it, and by his unwearied efforts, gives tone and character to all the schools under his supervision. The County Commissioner

should sustain the same relation to, and perform the same work in, the schools under his charge. He should visit every school in the county, not merely once a year, but every month, and devote his whole time, and all the energies of his mind, to produce improvement in teachers, schools and school-houses. Let us hope that many of the older and more populous counties will soon set an example in this matter, and prove to themselves, and show to others, what can be done by a School Commissioner who is paid to devote all his time to the work.

UNIFORMITY OF TEXT BOOKS.

Upon this subject we desire to offer a few suggestions, touching, first, the advantages to be derived from the adoption of a uniform series of text books in our schools; and second, noticing the character of the books in our recommended list. In the very outset, we are met with the objection of some, that strict uniformity of text books in a whole State would lead into a beaten track, and take away all inducement to improve the character of school books. On this subject it is sufficient to say that, in our democratic government, the simple recommendation of the Superintendent is neither a ukase nor an edict. It is nothing more nor less than his opinion, officially expressed and backed by that of leading teachers, that the books on the recommended list are as good as any others in their several departments; and that the pecuniary interests of the people, as well as the success of the schools, will be promoted by their adoption. If districts or counties think otherwise, there is no law of the State, or disposition on the part of the Superintendent, to force them to adopt his opinion. Under these circumstances, *strict uniformity* in all the schools of the State is a simple impossibility. So the objection alluded to can have no foundation. With all that can be done on this subject, it will be easy to find almost every variety of class books in the public or private schools of the State.

Still we can approximate to uniformity, and every approach to such a state of things will result in benefit to the people and their children. First, as a matter of economy, it would save many thousand dollars to the people of Missouri every year. As the matter now stands, school books are changed to suit the judg-

ment or caprice of almost every new teacher; and in this way changes of books are sometimes made in the same district two or three times in a single year. There are single families in the State that could at any time rake up from dark corners and closets forty or fifty dollars worth of discarded school books. Besides this, the constant change of books in schools leaves the merchant always in uncertainty respecting the sale of his stock on hand; and consequently he must add profit enough to cover this contingency. This circumstance alone adds from ten to twenty per cent. to the proper retail price of school books in Missouri.

Another great advantage of uniformity in text books, is found in its influence upon the minds of pupils. We have seen scholars not fifteen years of age who had taken a partial course in not less than five different English grammars. They had found constant differences amongst the authors, respecting definitions, rules and principles; and although these discrepancies were frequently nothing more than the difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee, yet their minds were so bewildered by the apparent contradictions, that a three-years' course of study left them without any settled or sensible notions of the subject. The same remark is equally applicable to other branches of study.

Under these circumstances, we cannot think of a better means of economizing money, and at the same time benefiting the schools, than that of adopting a uniform series of text books. It should be borne in mind, however, that the Superintendent does not recommend a forced introduction of new books, however superior they may be to those already in use; but that the matter should be brought about gradually, as the organization of new schools or classes may require the purchase of new books of some kind.

We have taken some pains to examine the list of text books recommended by our State Superintendent, and feel free to express the opinion that there is not a better series of school books used in any State of the Union. Fortunately, many of these books are already well known, and extensively used in our schools; so that, where there is a disposition, but little time will be necessary to secure the practical benefits of a uniform course of instruction.

McGUFFEY'S NEW SERIES OF READERS.

These Readers very properly stand at the head of the list; and to those teachers who have used the former series by the same

author, it might be sufficient to say, that these are a great improvement upon the older editions. McGuffey's Readers have been used very extensively, and held in great favor by teachers throughout the West for the last twenty years. No author or compiler of primary and first class Readers, has, in our humble opinion, evinced more talent or better taste than President McGuffey. The present edition is nearer perfection than any of the preceding, and gives evidence of great labor and care, as well as the exercise of good taste in every part of the series. The former editions, with all their good qualities, had one serious defect. This was the lack of an easy gradation between the primary and more advanced numbers of the series. The abrupt transition from the easy lessons of the old Second Eclectic Reader, to the compilations from our best authors in the Third, was a serious objection. This fault of the series has been wholly remedied in the present edition, by giving three instead of two primary Readers. Each book is also thoroughly graded, commencing with easier, and by degrees advancing to more difficult lessons. The character of the lessons in these first books, being filled with interesting narrative, striking incidents, pleasing anecdotes, and noble sentiments, yet always adapted to the comprehension of a child; the abundant exercises in orthography, coupled with every lesson, and the simple instruction in those matters that lie at the foundation of good reading, make these books all that could be desired. The teacher who cannot, by their aid, give his pupils a fair start in the acquirement of that best of all accomplishments, good reading, should attribute the failure to some deficiency on his part, or a radical fault in the material he has to work upon.

The more advanced numbers of the series, including the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and High School Readers, exhibit equal care and good taste in their compilation. It has only been within a few years that the compilers of school readers have seemed to recognize the fact, that pupils must not only comprehend, but take interest in, the subject matter of their reading lessons, in order to make rapid progress in the acquirement of this noble art. Dull sermons upon human duty, and dry, metaphysical disquisitions upon great virtues and small vices, thrown into Johnsonian periods, full of incomprehensible words, may serve to make a Sleepy-Hollow school, but never to train a class of good readers. This objection cannot be brought against McGuffey's Readers, for the lessons throughout are as attractive and instructive as a care-

ful selection from the fields of English and American literature could make them. The elocutionary lessons, definitions of difficult words, and explanatory notes found in the higher numbers of the series, add much to their value. In this connection, too, we may properly mention the Eclectic Speaker, which is a perfect gem amongst school books of this description. It will be found quite indispensable for school exhibitions, and, in fact, wherever scholars are in search of something rare and novel, as well as interesting, in the department of school oratory.

RAY'S ARITHMETIC, PARTS I., II. AND III.

Professor Ray is dead, but his works live after him, and will do more to perpetuate his fame than a monument of brass. No series of arithmetics has been used so extensively and successfully in the western country as this. The first two numbers are entirely mental, commencing with the tables and simple exercises, and ending with the most complex questions in analysis. Together, they furnish the means of thorough training and discipline in analytical arithmetic. Part III. is purely practical, and covers the whole ground of an ordinary school course in this most important and practical of common school studies. The definitions and rules are given with great clearness and conciseness, and great pains is taken to elucidate the principle on which each rule is founded. In the hands of a competent teacher, it is not likely that a better arithmetic can be found than Ray's Third Part. A great fault in most arithmetics is the want of a sufficient number and variety of practical examples, especially in the simple rules. No scholar will make a good arithmetician, or an expert accountant, until he is able to perform with accuracy and facility all the ordinary operations connected with the simple rules. The questions ordinarily found in the elementary part of an arithmetic, do not afford the tenth part of the practice necessary to make a scholar proficient and exact. Frequent reviews become useless, as the learner is working the same examples over and over again; and the teacher may be too closely employed to furnish original questions to any reasonable extent. To obviate this difficulty, the Key to Ray's Third Part, which should be in the hands of every teacher, contains a vast number of practical examples and their results, especially in the fundamental rules. These examples, as a matter of course, are different from those in the arithmetic itself,

and afford an easy method of securing thorough practice and discipline, and that, too, under circumstances where the scholar has no opportunity to consult his book for an answer. These slate and blackboard exercises, found in the Key, may be successfully used with a primary class, who are still engaged in the elementary parts of the mental course, so that when they are able to take hold of the practical arithmetic for a regular course, they will be prepared to make rapid progress in the study. The higher arithmetic and the algebras, by the same author, are equally excellent in their adaptation to the wants of more advanced classes. Taking the whole series together, it is doubtful whether its equal can be found amongst the school publications of America, or the world.

PINNEO'S GRAMMARS.

These works are less known in Missouri than either of the preceding. They are not the less worthy of use and patronage on that account. A distinctive feature of both the Primary and Analytical Grammar, by the same author, is a conciseness and simplicity of definitions, and a copiousness of practical exercises; qualities which commend them to teachers who have not had great experience in teaching, and which will be almost certain to produce good practical results in a class of learners.

We cannot give a better notice of these books than by copying the preface to the Primary Grammar, and simply adding that the preface is a true index to the contents of both the works:

In the preparation of this work, the following objects have been kept in view:

1. We have admitted nothing but the well established principles which govern the use of the English language, carefully avoiding suggestions, general remarks, criticisms, and minute exceptions, which, though often found in works of this kind, only embarrass the learner.

2. We have endeavored to present these in a concise and *simple* manner. While all the fundamental principles which form the basis of our language are explained and amply illustrated, we have made it a leading object to simplify and condense the matter.

3. The subject of grammar, usually so dry and tedious, we have attempted to invest with *attraction* and *interest*, by EXERCISES, numerous, simple, varied, and full; by simple and plain definitions; by explaining in a familiar manner all difficult terms; by frequent illustrations; and by repeated reviews. For this purpose, also, the inductive method is adopted, as far as it is applica-

ble to grammar, and the subject is developed in its natural rather than its scientific order. It is here taught as the child learns to talk, learning *things* and *names* first, and scientific arrangement afterward.

4. By the plan here adopted, the art of composition is taught in connection with the science of grammar. The pupil is learning to put words together into sentences, while he is studying their nature, properties and relations. Most of the exercises teach the construction of sentences together with parsing.

5. We have endeavored to secure, by a proper arrangement, an easy transition from simple to more difficult topics. Each point is taught thoroughly by question and answer, by illustration and exercises, before advance is permitted to another, and as a new one is taken up, all those which precede it are reviewed, so that the pupil may retain what he has gained, while advancing to new ground.

By these means we are enabled to include in a *cheap*, yet neat and substantial form, a large amount of instruction on all the important principles of English grammar.

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

The subject of Normal Schools is now attracting no inconsiderable degree of attention, in almost every enlightened community. In many of the States of this Union provision has been made for Normal instruction; in some instances, by the establishment of institutions devoted exclusively to that object; in others, by adding a Normal Department to Colleges and Collegiate Institutes. During the last few years, the necessity of Normal instruction has been more fully appreciated in this State. The meetings of the State Teachers' Associations have devoted a considerable part of their sessions to the discussion of the subject—the necessity, and the mode of accomplishing the desired object; and many of our ablest educators have urged the matter upon the attention of the people and the General Assembly. But thus far nothing has been accomplished by State legislation.

The present General Assembly has been memorialized upon the subject, asking to have a small sum set apart out of the Common School Fund, for the support of a Normal School, and a bill has been introduced, the title of which is, "To establish a State Normal College."

The first section authorizes the location "at such point as they ('the Board of Education of the State of Missouri')—created by

said bill) may deem most eligible." The second section makes the State Superintendent of Common Schools, the Secretary of the Board. The third section provides, that the Board shall receive no compensation, excepting their necessary traveling expenses, and that the first meeting shall be in Jefferson City. The fourth section names the object of the College, viz. : To qualify Teachers for the Common Schools of Missouri. The fifth section provides for the appointment of a general agent, whose labors would be devoted to the permanent establishment and endowment of such College. The sixth section gives authority to the Board to appoint a President, Professors and Teachers, fix their salaries, and otherwise direct the management of the Institution. The seventh section provides for a male and female department, and for the instruction, free of charge, of one Normal pupil from each county in the State, and one for each Representative in the Lower House of the Legislature ; each pupil, after graduation, to teach school in the State two years—an obligation which, for good cause, may be annulled. The eighth section authorizes County Courts to appropriate swamp lands to the endowment of said College ; the ninth, an election of President and Treasurer of the Board ; the tenth making the official term of the Board four years—one-fourth elective annually, the Governor being authorized to fill vacancies. The eleventh gives the Board authority to designate the age and qualification of matriculates. The twelfth authorizes the County Commissioner, or, in his absence, the County Clerk, to examine applicants for admission, with reference to moral character, and the County Court, if county aid is afforded, to require an obligation to teach in the county. The thirteenth section appropriates five thousand dollars from the Common School Fund, to assist in the erection of suitable buildings ; and six thousand dollars, annually, to pay salaries and other expenses.

If these small sums will be sufficient to test the practicability of establishing, upon a permanent basis, a Normal College adapted to the wants of the State, the bill ought to pass ; and it is the opinion of experienced educators, that the amount named will be sufficient. No one who can appreciate the wants of our educational interests, can doubt the necessity of a more thorough preparation for teaching than is obtained in an ordinary collegiate course. Though the range of studies is ample, defects in the primary course and the elementary principles, which underlie

the whole superstructure, are often, very often, overlooked or excused. We think the fault unpardonable, but it exists. With ample provision for Normal instruction, however, it is not irremediable, for a thorough Normal course will supply the educational deficiencies referred to; and the provision for such instruction, will induce the regular colleges to require a more careful preparation for matriculation. Six thousand dollars a year spent in properly qualifying teachers for their profession, will do more for the education of the youth of the State, female as well as male, than it can do by remaining in the common fund. We trust that this subject will not be lost sight of, nor the zeal of its friends abate until success crowns their efforts. Let ample provision be made by the authorities of this State for a thorough Normal course of instruction, and let the means be accessible to all who desire to avail themselves thereof, and we will soon cease to hear complaints of incompetent or indifferent teachers. Not many years will elapse before the supply of teachers, qualified for their duties, both by attainments and zeal, will be ample.

Elsewhere, in this number, will be found a communication in relation to Normal Schools, showing their utility and necessity, which, although written for the EDUCATOR, was allowed first to appear in the daily papers of this city, in order to get the arguments therein contained before the members of the General Assembly at an earlier day than could otherwise be done. The article will be found worthy of attentive perusal.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

In this number of the EDUCATOR will be found advertisements by HICKLING, SWAN & BREWER, of Boston, Mass., of Webster's Dictionary, Worcester's Speller, Hilliard's series of Readers, &c. They should be carefully read.

A. S. BARNES & Co., New York city, have also new advertisements in this number, which should be attentively examined.

GEO. SHERWOOD, Chicago, Ill., has something new to say to our readers, and should have a hearing. His establishment is an extensive one.

Our advertising columns will be found to contain much information that is valuable to the scholar, to literary institutions, to men of science, and, indeed, to all classes *in any way* interested in educational matters.

 THE NEWS PRESS.

The new paper at Brunswick, *The Central City and Brunswick*, we gladly place upon our exchange list. It is a large and ably edited journal. Dr. H. W. Cross, editor and publisher.

The Kansas Messenger, a weekly, published by J. W. Still, and edited by several reverend gentlemen of the Methodist Episcopal order, has recently been commenced at Baldwin City, Kansas Territory. Its objects are educational, in a comprehensive sense, and religious.

Baldwin City is thirteen miles due south from Lawrence, on the Santa Fe road, near to timber, and, it is stated, a most excellent place for a *home*—population small.

We cheerfully comply with the request to exchange.

The Western Dispatch, at Independence, Mo., has changed hands and name. It is now *The Democratic Gazette*, and is edited by A. W. McCoy—A. B. Hazzard & Co., proprietors.

PRINCIPLE VERSUS RULE.

We take great pleasure in copying from the *Marshall Democrat* a well written article upon "Mental Discipline," in which the writer, though modestly subscribing himself a "Small Teacher," very clearly proves, and aptly illustrates, the importance of mental arithmetic as a means of intellectual training. We have noticed with much interest a controversy that has been going on in the *Democrat*, on this subject, between the "Small Teacher" and several others, one of whom is dubbed a professor. We must confess our surprise that a gentleman wearing this honored and honorable title, should be found making war upon the only branch that cannot be taught in the everlasting, sing-song routine that makes many of our schools a scoff and a by-word. Right at this point, we imagine, is to be found the true difference between good and bad teaching, and, consequently, between good and bad schools. There are too many of our schools that still work on the "Gradgrind" principle of communicating an endless number of disconnected, discordant, unclassified, and incongruous *facts*, until the mind of the pupil becomes, in the language

of Mrs. Partington, "a heterojinous compound of fortuitous verbosity." And this is called education! It certainly is a kind of education, and this is certainly the practice of some teachers; but the practice is "more honored in the breach than in the observance," and the education is of a kind that merits no gratitude on the part of the pupil. Shall we never learn to distinguish between *rules* and *principles*, *facts* and *reasoning*, *words* and *things*? How many teachers are there, who fancy that they have arrived at the climax of perfection in the didactic art, when they are able to explain, by rule, the *mechanical* process of solving problems in arithmetic, and the higher branches of mathematics? If the scholar has learned to work out questions expertly, *by rule*, he is deemed an excellent arithmetician, whilst he has never dreamed of the *principle* that lies underneath, and on which the rule is founded. Teach him this, and he may forget the verbiage of the rule a thousand times, but the principle will remain as a part of his mental constitution. A pupil who has learned arithmetic on the *mechanical* plan, is not half so good for practical work as a Babbage machine; for that has, at least, the virtue of being always accurate.

We regard mental arithmetic as one of the most important branches in our common school course; and it is the only study in that course that cannot, by any possibility, be brought down to the low grade of a mere exercise of the memory. The scholar that studies analytical arithmetic must *think* for himself, and think all the time. In fact, there is no study that so develops the growing powers of thought, cultivates and establishes a habit of logical analysis, and prepares the student to master all the difficulties of mathematical science, as this same intellectual arithmetic.

But we fear our interest on this subject will induce us to make the preface longer than the speech; and we will simply add, that the above remarks are entirely impersonal, as we always contend for "principles, not men;" and at the same time extend to a "Small Teacher" a kindly and general welcome to our pages.

ERRATA.—In the seventh line of the fifth stanza of the poetic contribution entitled "God is Love," the word "shades" should be "sheds." A few other typographical errors, which the reader will readily correct, escaped attention until too late.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

We are gratified to learn that Prof. J. L. TRACY has undertaken, by the wish, and under the auspices of the State Superintendent and the State Teachers' Association, to visit different sections of the State, to confer with School Commissioners, Teachers, and friends of popular education generally; to assist in organizing and conducting Teachers' Institutes, deliver lectures upon educational topics, and aid, so far as he can, the good work in Missouri. His long experience as a practical and successful teacher; his extensive and favorable acquaintance with the friends of education throughout the State, and his ability to interest an audience upon such subjects as he may be called upon to speak, give him admirable qualifications for this great work.

We do not doubt that Mr. TRACY will meet with a cordial welcome in every county that he can visit, nor do we doubt that great and beneficial results will flow from his mission. For particulars respecting this enterprise, see Mr. TRACY'S circular on another page.

APOLOGETIC.—In undertaking the editorial management of the EDUCATOR we had not supposed that our position in another capacity would involve so large an amount of labor during the session of the General Assembly; and even during the session, supposed, from day to day, that very shortly we would find time to give attention to this matter; but instead thereof our duties having priority of claim, and imperative in their nature, increased as the session advanced; and even after the General Assembly adjourned it was some days before we could sufficiently extricate ourselves to give a thought to the EDUCATOR.

At last, however, we again pay our respects to our readers, expecting to do so again in a few days, and in a more satisfactory manner. It is hoped that no further interruption will occur, and, in any event, we will seasonably provide for any future contingency.

MERE CULTIVATION OF INTELLECT NOT SUFFICIENT.—Numerous have been the instances illustrative of the fact, that the greatest scourges of our race are men of gigantic *cultivated* intellect. Where knowledge but qualifies its possessor for inflicting misery, ignorance would indeed be bliss.—*Prof. Mayhew.*

For the Educator.

NORMAL SCHOOL IN MISSOURI.

The necessity of some such agency in our State, is apparent, from several reasons. First, we need it on account of the low standard of qualification to be found amongst the teachers of our common schools. This assertion is not made to derogate from the character and standing of teachers, but is mentioned as a simple fact, which they themselves would, almost unanimously, assent to. Nor are they to be blamed for the evil, for under existing circumstances, they can apply no adequate remedy. They have enjoyed no special means of preparation for the work, their opportunities of culture and discipline having been confined to the district school, under instructors as little qualified as themselves. A man smitten with some terrible disease, who should trust himself to the care of an ignorant quack, would have nobody to blame for the result but himself. Can we blame any but ourselves, if we exalt an ignorant man to the sacred office of teacher, and bid him sweep with rude and unskillful hand, that harp of a thousand strings which God designed to have tuned in unison with his own infinite mind? The dying man would be pardonable for calling in a quack, if no better physician could be found; so we are justified in doing the best we can under present circumstances; but these circumstances urge us by every sentiment of enlightened patriotism, to improve our system of common schools.

Again. We do specially need perfection in our educational system, on account of the character of our population, and the rapidity with which our numbers are increasing. At present we have about a million of inhabitants, drawn together from all the nations of the civilized world, possessing all their native prejudices and opinions, calculated to fill society with the elements of discord. We have the hard-working, as well as the philosophising and speculating German, the mercurial Frenchman, the moody Spaniard, the English peasant with his radicalism, the Irish peasant with his shillaly, the Yankee with his notions, and, thank God, enough of true conservatism at present, to hold these discordant elements in a state of comparative peace. But what shall be done, when, in a few years, this million of inhabitants has increased to two millions; when these different nationalities shall have gained such increase of numbers and power as to contend stoutly for the adoption of their peculiarities? What shall we do, when these contending elements of society are all striving for the mastery? Can we legislate them into harmony? We might as well attempt to dam up the Missouri with cornstalks. The only legislation that can be effectual in this case, must be enacted on that best of all Democratic platforms, the floor of the district school house. If the children from these different na-

tionalities are *educated together*, the next generation will be sure to *act together*.

Another and still stronger necessity for the agency of a Normal School in Missouri, is found in the principle of self protection; the means of defending ourselves from the inroads of error, and at the same time giving employment to our own citizens, in preference to foreigners. As the matter now stands, a majority of teachers in our common schools are mere sojourners from the East and North, who come here because it is profitable, or because a higher grade of qualification has cut them off from employment at home.

Respecting the influence of such teachers, each one must judge for himself. Whilst it cannot be supposed that many of them come amongst us with the special design of sowing the seeds of error upon those subjects that are vital to our interests as a slave State, yet there is no doubt respecting the immense power they can exert, if so disposed. Next to the mother, no individual has the future opinions and character of the child so much within his control as the teacher. No man is fit to teach, who cannot secure the confidence and love of his pupils; and with these gained, we cannot calculate the amount of his influence on the weal or woe of future generations.

But another, and perhaps a worse feature is, that whilst we thus call upon our neighbors from the older States to educate our children, and thus send a large amount of money out of the country every year, we, at the same time, suffer the talent of our own State to lie buried and unemployed. There are thousands of the youth of Missouri, of both sexes, possessing all the natural talent and disposition for the office of teacher, but who are wholly destitute of the means to make any adequate preparation for the work. Would it not be the part of sound policy, as well as of true economy, to offer these persons some encouragement to prepare themselves for the work, and thus place the education of our children in the hands of those who have been brought up amongst us, and possess the same *habits, sympathies and opinions* with ourselves.

MODE OF CONDUCTING NORMAL SCHOOLS—THEIR INFLUENCE.

The question is sometimes asked, by those who have given but little attention to the subject, how does a normal school excel other good seminaries, in its ability to give teachers a thorough course of training for their work? It might as well be asked, how can a medical school do more than an ordinary college, to prepare its students for the practice of medicine? Teaching is as truly a science as medicine, law, or divinity, requiring in its professors, not only extensive and accurate knowledge in the various departments of literature and science, embracing, especially, a thorough acquaintance with the laws of mind, but the possession of that peculiar talent which enables one person to

communicate clearly his knowledge to another. With regard to this latter talent, the pupils of a normal school are thoroughly tested, and if found so deficient as to unfit them for the office of teacher, are kindly advised to turn their attention to some other pursuit in life.

The first object sought in a normal school is, to secure to its pupils a thoroughly accurate and critical knowledge, not only of the branches they may be required to teach, but of other and higher departments of study. For this purpose, recitations are so conducted, that pupils are not merely required to state *rules and facts*, but to enunciate the *principles* on which these rules are founded, and clearly to illustrate every process. By this means they learn to investigate truth themselves, and communicate the same spirit to others. In short, the normal school aims to furnish its pupils with such a fund of positive knowledge, and imbue their minds with such a love for their glorious calling, as will make them true lights of the world, commanding the respect of the people, and securing the confidence of their children. In these circumstances is found the utter incompatibility of a teachers' seminary with any other institution of learning.

In a seminary where the pupils are all preparing for a single life-object, and their future pursuit is always exalted, instead of being contemned in their hearing, there will grow up amongst them, not only a bond of union and sympathy, but they will all possess a proper appreciation of the noble calling for which they are preparing. This cannot happen when a normal school is made a mere attachment to a college or university. In such a case, the utter dissimilarity in studies and future pursuits, the little attention that can be given to a class of normal students by a single professor, the disposition of other students to depreciate their talents and cast odium upon their prospective employment, all combined, will soon drive the normal department to the wall, and the whole scheme will result, as it ever has done, in a miserable failure. But an incontrovertible argument against such an unnatural union, is found in the fact that an arrangement of this kind could make no provision for the education of female teachers, a class who are admirably suited to do a large portion of the work, in any well organized system of primary instruction. At present, more than nine-tenths of all the female teachers in Missouri come from other States, and the principals of our female academies have to make an annual pilgrimage to the East and North to supply their wants. Is it either politic or just thus to neglect our own daughters, whilst the places of honor and profit, properly belonging to them, are given to strangers? But why, says one, are not our own daughters prepared for the work? Simply because there is no means of preparation. The daughters of the rich are not expected to engage in teaching, even if their training at a fashionable seminary gave them any proper qualification;

but there are thousands of them in moderate circumstances, possessing all the natural talent and capacity for the work, who would seize with avidity any means of preparing for the office of teacher. Would it not be good policy, as well as even-handed justice, to offer some encouragement to their efforts in this cause?

Some persons labor under the misapprehension that a normal school would exert no influence beyond the neighborhoods occupied by its own graduates, whilst in fact, such an institution would send a tide of influence through all the ramifications of society, and be felt in every county and district of the State. A railroad would be a poor investment in the way of developing the material wealth of a country, if its influence were confined to those living directly on the line of its route. But instead of this, such works communicate new life and energy to a whole State, increasing the value of property, quickening the spirit of commerce, and giving a healthful stimulus to every department of labor and enterprise. So with a normal school. It could not, for many years, expect to supply teachers for all the neighborhoods of the State, yet its indirect influence would be both extensive and valuable.

In the first place, it would induce in the minds of the people a higher and juster estimate of the value of a good education. The minds of men would be drawn to the subject, and whenever they read or thought of it, they would be likely to arrive at proper conclusions. When one neighborhood waked up in educational matters, built a good school house, and employed a first class teacher, its example would be felt through a whole county.

Its influence upon teachers, too, would be most salutary. Whenever they learned that a higher standard of qualification had been erected, and that they must approximate to it or lose their employment, they would immediately adopt such means as they could for individual and mutual improvement. There would then be but little difficulty in getting together the teachers of a county to spend two or three days in the instruction and most valuable exercises of an institute. And wherever a graduate of the normal college should go, he would be a kind of missionary to preach by example the doctrine of higher aims and better workmanship among his brethren. Under the influence of such schools as should and would be taught by the well-trained graduates of a normal college, people would soon learn that they had paid large sums of money for an education which, in many cases, was nothing but the barren husk, whilst the genuine fruit had been denied to them and their children. Learning the error of the past, parents would soon take measures to right themselves. They would scout the idea of paying a man to teach their children whom they would hardly employ to drive and manage a team. In short, the influence of such an institution in our State, would be as diffusive and as blessed as light itself; elevating the character of both teacher and

taught, scattering broadcast the seeds of knowledge and virtue, and sending forward the tide of its beneficence, still widening and deepening in its onward flow, to bless the children of coming generations.

ECONOMY OF A NORMAL SCHOOL.

If it could be proved that the establishment of a State normal school in Missouri, whilst it should fulfill its great mission of perfecting our educational system, would at the same time actually save money to the people of the State, there would be but one voice as to the policy of such a measure.

The above proposition can be demonstrated to every unprejudiced mind. Let us inquire, in the first place, what the bill now before the Legislature contemplates. It does not call for a dollar from the State treasury, but is simply a readjustment of the educational machinery of the State. This readjustment will call for two per cent. of the present State fund, not to be diverted from the common schools, but to be so appropriated as to perfect their condition. It is a conceded fact, that under present circumstances, a considerable portion of the school money is lost to the children for the want of well qualified teachers to carry out the wise designs of the State.

Is it not economy, as well as justice, to use two per cent. of this money to render the balance really available and valuable to the children? Would it be bad economy to pay two per cent. on money to be sent to a family of orphans across the Atlantic, in order to insure its safe delivery? Is it good economy to allow a piece of valuable machinery to be destroyed by its own action for the want of a balance-wheel?

The amount necessary to thoroughly organize and sustain a State normal school would not be equal to *two cents* deduction from the annual apportionment to each child in the Commonwealth. Even if the measure is regarded as an experiment, looking with hope and fair promise to the accomplishment of a great good, what man in Missouri would grudge the two cents to give it a fair trial?

It may be added, in this connexion, that even with the appropriation necessary for the establishment of a normal school, the State school fund for distribution will still be larger than in any former year.

The economy of the measure may be shown in another way. We learn, from the report of the State Superintendent, that about a half million of dollars is annually paid to teachers who have no permanent residence or interest in the State. Is it not worth two per cent. of this money to retain it in circulation at home, instead of sending it abroad? But two per cent. of half a million is nearly double the amount asked for in the bill.

Another means of saving money to the people of the State, by a normal school, is to be found in the influence of such an insti-

tution to produce uniformity of text books. This it can do more effectually than all the recommendations of State Superintendents, backed by the labors of book agents. Every parent knows how his pocket has been taxed from year to year, and sometimes two or three times a year, to purchase different books, to satisfy the wishes of a new teacher. If all the discarded text books that are now lying idle and worthless upon the shelves of dark closets, or thrown with other useless lumber into garret corners, could be gathered and sold at publisher's prices, they would furnish a princely endowment for a college. If it is asked how a normal school can accomplish this, it may be answered that such an institution becomes a center of light and influence, and is looked up to as a proper standard in all matters relating to common schools. The text books used in a normal school will inevitably find their way into use throughout the State, and thus save the people from a useless, as well as burdensome, tax.

MISSOURI.

From the "Marshall Democrat."

MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

EDITOR DEMOCRAT: To sharpen the perceptive faculty of the scholar, to improve his judgment and strengthen his memory, are, I repeat, the chief aims of a culture merely intellectual; and the only means to attain these great ends, is the studious, intelligent exercise of the mental faculties of the student. With this understanding, let us inquire how far this treatise called Mental Arithmetic (say Ray's 2d Part), can be used as a means to the end: and first let us glance at this proposition—are questions in number best suited to exercise the faculties of the young reasoner? I answer they are, and these are my reasons:

The unit, the basis and constituent of number, combine or involve it as you may, retains in all positions its fixed individuality, and presents to the mind an invariable landmark, to which, or from which, we reason in arithmetical questions. One unit, moreover, is just as distinct and as sharply defined from its next neighbor, two, as it is from two thousand; and this distinctness imparts to its combinations a facility of separation which belongs to no other species of exercise. This property of the unit recommends arithmetical questions as the very best medium for training young minds, as they obviously require a fixed and distinct standard, by which to conduct the process of reasoning. They require besides, that while the conditions of the question are sufficiently involved to exercise the faculties, "the chequers" in this mental game shall run no risk of getting confounded; and these properties are present in number, but to the same degree in no other species of questions. They will not be sought, I sup-

pose, in ethical or other metaphysical abstractions, nor can they be found in mathematical theorems. The history of mind, and indeed its constitution, most clearly show that the relations of extension are infinitely too complex to be apprehended by the average of minds, before, at least, the age of twelve or thirteen. If there have been juvenile prodigies, who intuitively grasped mathematical truths, they stand out in relief from the general level, and, like most exceptional cases, only serve to confirm the general rule. Hence, I infer, and I hope with sound reason, that numerical exercises are best adapted to the mental condition of the young reasoner.

Let us next examine the plan upon which this little treatise, mental arithmetic, is constructed. Commencing with the simplest examples in addition and subtraction, it drills the scholar most thoroughly in both, making him an apt, ready reckoner, so far as these processes are concerned. Having performed a similar service in multiplication and division, and illustrated, most thoroughly, the why and the when of both operations, it gives him examples involving the "four fundamental rules," and tests, thereby, his knowledge of principles. It next, by the clearest illustrations, explains the nature of a fraction, and removes all the terrors that usually encircle this bugbear of scholars; and advancing by easy gradations, it complicates the questions, requiring from the student a proportionately closer analysis and induction. Now this is the mental power we all desire to see strengthened and cherished; the power, namely, to take to pieces every proposition submitted to our consideration; and having arrived at its first principle, to infer therefrom, step by step, a logically truthful conclusion. It is our mail of proof against the attacks of the sophist; our sole antidote against the poison of the rhetorical trickster; and if this mental arithmetic is the book best adapted to form in the young such a *habit of mind*, its price is above rubies. Let us avoid generalities, take an example, and see how it specially operates: what mode of procedure must be adopted in its solution, and what faculties of the mind are called into action. I select at random the following:

"A man has \$50 in gold and silver, and five-sixths of the silver plus \$10 are equal to seven-fourths of the gold; required how many dollars he has of either."

The scholar has been prepared for solving this question by an assiduous course of cause and effect, and knows, by this time, that representatives of both sums of money must be found in parts of one of them. Before he attempts the solution, he must clearly perceive this condition of success, and select, by his judgment, the one to be preferred. He will, of course, prefer the gold, and reasoning from the magical one, he finds that the silver plus \$12 is equal to twenty-one tenths of the gold, that is, equal to twenty-one tenths of the gold less \$12, and the gold being

added, he has thirty-one tenths less \$12, equal to \$50, from which he finds the number of either.

It were impertinent to write how such exercises sharpen and strengthen the faculties of the scholar, or to point out, at length, their collateral advantages. The candid inquirer will easily see what a corrective they are to the habit of "wandering" in thought, and will concur, I would hope, in this further conclusion, that a mind, accustomed to the pursuit of truth in one study, has more inclination and better ability to seek it in *all*, and is not likely to rest satisfied with the parrot process of gabbling sounds without sense.

Before closing, permit me to briefly notice the objections I have heard urged against this study:

1st. It is said to be "too difficult for a young mind." It is enough to reply, that in climbing a ladder, if properly constructed, the last step is just as easy as the first. If dizzy, or deficient in nerve, we, by practice and wont, can accustom ourselves to the novel sensation. Let us, at worst, go down a few steps, and next time we may hope to get a few steps higher up, and if we have any faculty for climbing, eventually reach the top.

2d. "Demonstration on the blackboard is more satisfactory, and, for practical purposes, more beneficial." I reply, there is no demonstration on the blackboard. If there is a solution at all, it must come from the head of the scholar, and to write down the links in the chain, as mementoes or mile stones, completely defeats my "practical purpose," which is to give him reliable memory. If the last named faculty is to be strengthened, it is evident enough he must use *it* as his blackboard.

3d. This objection I supply myself, and it is the only fatal one that can be urged, to wit: The laziness of scholars, and the stupid indifference, or no less culpable incompetency of teachers. For the former, I would prescribe, in a desperate case, strong doses of the extract of birch; for the latter—

"A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout"—

and if these failed, confinement, with board and lodging, at the cost of the State, as the most economical measure.

SMALL TEACHER.

ELEVATE THE MASSES.—The plan of this nation was not, and is not, to see how many *individuals* we can raise up, who shall be distinguished, but to see how high, by Free Schools and Free Institutions, we can raise the *great mass* of population.—
Rev. John Todd.

CIRCULAR.

To School Commissioners, Teachers, Trustees, and other Friends of Popular Education.

GENTLEMEN: By the wishes, and under the auspices and sanction of the State Superintendent, and as General Agent of the State Teachers' Association, I have undertaken to visit the different sections and counties of the State, to assist you when desired, to inaugurate such measures, and carry into effect such organizations, as have been found most efficient, in perfecting a system of popular education.

Although I have had long experience in the practical duties of the school room, and have united with this a careful study of the subject of teaching, both as a science and an art, and have added to these, frequent observation of the practice in our best institutions in different parts of the United States, yet I shall be far from wishing to dictate any particular course to you. As a co-worker in this great and glorious cause, I shall be happy to consult with you upon the interests of education, and if agreeable, to offer such suggestions as my experience, reading, and observation may induce me to consider as adapted to produce beneficial and practical results.

In all parts of the country, where the experiment has been tried, the Teachers' Institute has been found to be a most efficient agency for the improvement of our Common School System. An organization of this kind pre-supposes that the teachers of a county take sufficient interest in their work, to meet together occasionally, for purposes of consultation and mutual improvement. When once organized, the principal exercises of a Teachers' Institute should consist of plain, simple, practical lectures upon the branches of study in our common school course; giving such solutions of the more difficult points, and such suggestions as to the best modes of communicating and illustrating truth, as will be of practical advantage to all; and especially to the younger and less experienced teachers. Lectures upon these subjects, as well as upon the best modes of school management and discipline, interspersed with free discussion upon these and other kindred topics, cannot fail to bring lasting benefit to those who participate in them. Entertaining these views, I propose, when teachers are willing to attend, to hold a Teachers' Institute, of at least one day, in each county that I visit.

Respecting the time of holding, and character of such meetings, allow me to offer a few suggestions. As a general rule, the teachers' meeting or Institute, should be held on a Saturday, when schools are not in session, and at the county seat, or some central or convenient point. Friday and Saturday nights should be devoted to popular lectures, upon such topics connected with education, as will interest a mixed audience, and pains should be taken to induce the people, who are at last the parties most deeply interested, to attend. On Saturday morning at nine o'clock, the teachers, with such pupils of the older class, as may be

willing to attend, should come together, not to be tickled with flourishes of rhetoric or flights of oratory, but to do a hard day's work. Teachers of some experience should be appointed to write essays or deliver familiar lectures upon such branches of common school study, or such other educational topics as may suit them; whilst all should understand that one-fourth of the time will be devoted to free conversational discussion, upon the subjects brought forward in the lectures and essays. By this means, every individual, if so disposed, will be personally and practically engaged in the day's exercises. I speak of the older class of pupils, because some of them may hereafter become teachers, and their presence will always add interest to such a meeting. After making such distribution of duties amongst the teachers of the county as may be practicable, I will undertake to fill the vacant hours with such ability as I can command.

On the first or second night of the meeting, I will present to the consideration of those present, the subject of "uniformity of text books," a matter that has received the earnest recommendation of the State Superintendent, and the warm approval of the intelligent friends of education throughout the State. Our present system of constant change, produces not only a bewildering and dissipating influence upon the minds of pupils, but entails a useless and burdensome tax upon parents. The books recommended by the State Superintendent, and endorsed by leading teachers throughout the State, have been selected with great care, and it is not likely that there is a better series of school books in any State of the Union, than the one now commended to the patronage of the schools in Missouri. Fortunately too, most of the books are already well known, and extensively used, so that where there is a disposition to produce uniformity, but little time or expense will be necessary to secure the desired object.

When School Commissioners will give me notice of a proposed meeting of a county Teachers' Institute, I will immediately forward to their address, copies of the books on the recommended list, in order that they may be previously examined by teachers and others. In such cases the Commissioner or teacher who may take the lead in the matter, should give specific instructions as to the direction, and mode of sending the package of books.

When an Institute meeting is appointed in a town, a few citizens, who feel most interested upon the subject of education, should be consulted upon the subject of offering hospitality to those teachers who may attend. This needs only to be named, to be accomplished, for there is not a town or village in the State, that would not cheerfully extend its hospitalities to those engaged in so good a work.

All letters should be addressed to me at Jefferson City, care of State Superintendent.

J. L. TRACY,

General Agent of State Teachers' Association.

Jefferson City, March 23, 1859.